

## Lounger's Miscellany.

### NUMBER XV.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 1789.

*Hæredis fletus sub personâ rifus est.*

PUBLIUS SYRUS.

“ ’Tis not your *person*  
 “ My stomach’s set so sharp and fierce on;  
 “ But ’tis your better part — your *riches*,  
 “ That my sorrowful heart bewitches:  
 “ For grief in all his dol’rous battles  
 “ N’ advantage finds like goods and chattels.”

HUDIBRAS.

THE inhabitants of Great-Britain, like those of many other countries of the known world, are divided into two parts. The first part is comprised of those who have lived, do live, and

P

will

will continue to live, as long as they can; and the second, of those who have expected, do expect, and will expect to live, when the other part dies. It is by no means wonderful, therefore, that the cement of friendship between old age and youth should not be very strong, when it so frequently happens, that old age is considered by youth as one who stands between him and the possession of his hopes; and youth by old age, as a creditor who is eager to seize upon his goods in the instant that the debt becomes due.

Providence, however, whose operations are not always to be controuled by our wishes, or to be regulated by our calculations, sometimes takes off a younger brother before an elder, a son before a father, or a nephew before his uncle. The confusion which such an *irregularity* creates, is a subject of curious contemplation to any one who can for a moment quit his own concerns, and look round upon his neighbours. The survivor is then compelled to encourage a new train of dependencies, and to give hopes to a new race of sycophants. It sometimes happens, that an affectionate daughter, whose tender heart had long fluttered with the anxious expectation of dazzling her beholders in all the splendour of her mother's jewels, is hurried from this world of compliment and finery before she has yet tyrannized a third winter in the pride and power of her beauty. The inconsolable mother is, in the mean time, doomed to find (ah! scarcely to be met with!) some other listener, to whom she may recount the triumphs of her youth, who will hear with equal patience and attention the compliments of her admirers enumerated, bear with equal perseverance the peevish authority of vain and petulant old age, and look with equal anxiety and affection to her dissolution, as the accomplishment of all her hopes, and the reward of all her



her services. I was immediately led to make a few observations by the occurrence of a circumstance to which, not long ago, I was an eye-witness, which proved to me, that the memory of the deceased is frequently profaned by the negligence of the heir.

In my way to London, on the great Western road, I met one of those gloomy vehicles of the dead, with its long train of mourning-coaches, its customary attendants, and the usual paraphernalia of sorrow. Upon passing it, my attention was engaged by a noise somewhat inconsistent with the decent and silent solemnity of grief, which proceeded from one of the mourning coaches. When I examined into the cause of this disturbance, how great was my surprise to find, that it originated from four persons who occupied the coach, and were engaged in a rubber at whist. A dispute had arisen on the subject of an odd trick; to settle which I was vehemently appealed to by either party; but not having Hoyle either in my pocket or at my fingers' ends, I was compelled to decline the acceptance of an honour they were desirous of conferring upon me, in making me their umpire on the occasion.

To obviate these inconveniences, which the vulgar prejudices of the world are sometimes inclined to consider as improprieties or indecencies, I would recommend to every Gentleman Undertaker who conducts a Black Job (as it is very properly, and very emphatically, called) to any distance from the metropolis, uniformly to pursue the following plan, which at present has been but partially adopted. Amongst the number of coaches appointed to attend on the dead body, it is injudicious, and perhaps dangerous, to suffer them all to be filled with passengers, at so

much a mile instead of the usual compliment of hired mourners, because the employer will then have just cause to complain that the relics of his poor dead relation have not been duly and properly honoured. This may not, indeed, come to the ears of the employer; but a man of business should run as little risque as possible. I advise, therefore, that those mourning coaches which are devoted to the carrying occasional passengers, like a stage-coach, should keep at some distance from the hearse, either before or behind; particularly as this class of mourners are under the necessity of abating the violence of their grief, by calls at every ale-house which good fortune throws in their way. Thus much for the detached party. I shall now lay down a short rule or two to be observed by those who attend the main body. The extravagance of an heir just come to his relation's estate, and desirous of doing the highest honour to the old gentleman's memory, sometimes leads him to immure eight or ten living souls, properly equipped with black breeches and white handkerchiefs, for three or four days in constant attendance upon the old fellow's carcase, while it is conveyed from London perhaps to the Land's-end. Instead of this needless expence, why not conform to the following ready plan, which I rejoice to find, from two or three splendid instances I could name, is not unlikely to come into vogue amongst us?



Let four black coats, in decent repair, and an equal number of waistcoats and breeches, be carefully stuffed with the best meadow-hay, at a time when that article is cheap, so as to form four figures, nearly resembling that of Guy Fawkes, which is presented to us in every market town on the fifth of November.—Let these figures be fixed by straps, and other such conveniences, in different attitudes of grief in their respective carriages, each having a white hand-



handkerchief over his face, which will at the same time heighten and conceal the deceit. Especial care, however, must be taken, that the windows be always kept shut, as I am informed, upon very good authority, it once happened, that a Yorkshire horse, with a penetration peculiar to the men and beasts of that country, thrusting his nose into one of these coaches, discovered the imposition, and without leaving the spot, devoured two couple of mourners, mangling their legs and arms in a most shocking manner, tearing out their entrails, and scarcely permitting the semblance of human nature to be traced in the objects of his insatiable appetite. The funeral procession, by attending to *my* rules, will appear with equal grandeur and greater solemnity, and this at a much easier expence. The silence and orderly conduct of *my* mourners will reflect an honour upon the general character of our nation, which is at present noticed by foreigners for something not quite so decent. The drunkenness, so universally considered as the privileged attendant upon these sort of *excursions*, will be in a great measure put a stop to; and for this, as well as many other politic reasons, I sincerely recommend the encouragement of a plan, already entered upon by certain well-disposed persons, to the nobility, gentry, freeholders, and all other inhabitants of Great-Britain.

The enlightened age in which we live has very judiciously banished, as much as possible, the dismal and useless ceremonies with which the memories of our ancestors were honoured. The sable and gloomy habit of grief is now laid aside, after half the time of its former appearance has expired. The son is no longer compelled, by the arbitrary power of custom, to devote a whole twelvemonth to the tediousness of sober and decent sorrow; but after half that time (*non est mora longa*), every restraint of that

fort is removed, and he is permitted to honour the memory of his father, by embracing the earliest opportunity to squander his estate, and ruin his constitution!

- “Gold; yellow, glittering, precious gold!
- “Gold! that will make black, white; foul, fair; wrong, right;
- “Base, noble; old, young; coward, valiant.
- “Ha! ye Gods! why this
- “Will lug your priests and servants from your sides;
- “Pluck stout mens’ pillows from below their heads.
- “This yellow slave
- “Will knit and break religions; bless th’ accurs’d;
- “Make the hoar leprosy ador’d; place thieves,
- “And give them title, knee, and approbation,
- “With senators on the bench.”

SHAKESPEARE’S *Timon of Athens*.

LONDON: Printed by J. NICHOLS, for T. and J. EGERTON,

MILITARY LIBRARY, WHITEHALL;

Where all Communications (post-paid) for this Paper, directed to ABEL SLUG, Esq;

will be received.

Sold also by C. S. RANN, OXFORD.

MDCCLXXXIX.

[To be continued every SATURDAY, Price Three Pence.]